

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for operating an aircraft, comprising the steps of:

receiving guidance instructions and guidance parameters at a navigation computer;
transmitting automatic pilot instructions from said navigation computer to a flight control computer over a dedicated communication link;

receiving control instructions and said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer;

in an automatic pilot mode, generating a first plurality of operating commands based on said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer; and

in a manual pilot mode, generating a second plurality of operating commands based on said control instructions at said flight control computer; ~~and~~

~~validating a single control function upon which said first and second pluralities of operating commands are based.~~

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of receiving control parameters at said flight control computer.

Claims 4-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Original): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of generating said automatic pilot instructions at said navigation computer based on said guidance instructions and on said guidance parameters.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of Claim 7, wherein said automatic pilot instructions correspond in nature to said control instructions.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded vertical load factor.

Claim 10 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded roll rate.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded yaw.

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claims 13 (Currently Amended): A method for operating an aircraft, comprising the steps of:

transmitting automatic pilot instructions from a navigation computer ~~directly~~ to a flight control computer over a dedicated communication link;

receiving control instructions and said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer;

in an automatic pilot mode, generating a first plurality of operating commands based on said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer; and

in a manual pilot mode, generating a second plurality of operating commands based on said control instructions at said flight control computer; ~~and~~

~~validating a single control function upon which said first and second pluralities of operating commands are based.~~

Claims 14-25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of receiving control parameters at said flight control computer comprises receiving said control parameters via an input different from both an input through which said control instructions are received and an input through which said automatic pilot instructions are received.

Claim 27 (Canceled).

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said first plurality of operating commands from said flight control computer to a plurality of control surfaces.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 28, further comprising the step of receiving inertial information at said navigation computer.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 29, wherein a delay between a time at which said inertial information is received at said navigation computer and a time at

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which said first plurality of operating commands is transmitted from said flight control computer to said plurality of control surfaces is minimized.